

Oklahoma

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ANNUAL TRAINING 2006



OFFICE OF THE
**ADJUTANT
GENERAL**

Maj. Gen.

Harry M. Wyatt III



I am sure that you have heard that Governor Henry has signed a memorandum of agreement that allows the Oklahoma National Guard to assist federal authorities and the New Mexico and California National Guard with border enforcement and construction efforts.

More than 300 Soldiers and Airmen of the 138th Civil Engineering Squadron, 45th Field Artillery Brigade, 285th Aviation Company, and the 120th Engineer Battalion have been identified to support the operations. Deployments in support of the operation will be for approximately three weeks over the next three months. All duty will be performed in a Title 32 status very similar to operations during Katrina. Operations along the border will include construction; aerial observation and border entry check point duties.

The border mission we are undertaking is one that is extremely important and one that we are very capable of performing. The National Guard continues to show the American public its adaptability to mission preparedness at home and abroad everyday. We are truly equal partners in the Global War on Terrorism and protection of our citizens at home.

With everything else on our plate...let's talk about our Number One priority, Recruiting and Retention. I want everyone to reach for their calendar and put a big red circle around Saturday, September 30th. That is the deadline to arrive at our recruiting goal of 7,169 Soldiers in the Oklahoma Army National Guard. I can't stress enough the importance of accomplishing that objective. Force structure, funding and other elements critical to our operation in future years depends on the successful completion of our recruiting and retention effort. On the Air Guard side, both wings are above 98 percent, but we need to be above 100 percent.

We have achieved remarkable results in the last several months. Our recruiting and retention successes thus far are a direct result of focus and execution by our recruiting and retention force as well as the emphasis placed on recruiting and retention at the unit level. Another 100+ recruiting month in June of 104 enlistments has brought us to our current strength of 7,065!

Keep the momentum going—I have no doubt that we will meet or exceed our recruiting goal. Again, good work, stay focused...our future is in our hands. Let's take it over the top!

UNIT NEWS

In Brief

Operation Iraqi Freedom

1st Battalion, 158th Field Artillery (MLRS)

Approximately 150 Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 158th Field Artillery (MLRS) were mobilized for deployment training at Fort Lewis, Wash. The unit deployed overseas in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and are currently serving in Iraq. The Soldiers will assist in security operations while deployed.

1345th Transportation Company

The 1345th has completed their pre-deployment training at Ft. Bliss, Texas and has deployed to Iraq as a Security Force SECFOR in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 1345th is scheduled to return in the Spring of 2007.

Operation Enduring Freedom

1st Battalion, 180th Infantry

The 180th has completed their training at Camp Shelby, Miss., and has deployed to Afghanistan as be part of a multinational task force whose mission is to train and mentor Soldiers in the new Afghan National Army. Members of the 180th Infantry are providing security for the international coalition of trainers and the Afghan trainees.



Strength Management

30 SEP 06
GOAL7,169
CURRENT
STRENGTH*...7,065

SHORT
OF GOAL104

THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
Maj. Gen. Harry M. Wyatt III

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Combined arms live fire culminates 45th Infantry Brigade Annual Training

by Maj. Rhonda McGuire,
OKARNG

Office of Public Affairs

Numerous units from Oklahoma's famed 45th Infantry Brigade have been deployed since 9/11. On real world missions to Iraq and Afghanistan, the Soldiers have encountered Improvised Explosive Devices (IED), conducted search and cordon operations, engaged targets with weaponry and defended the area of operations. This year the brigade's Soldiers reinforced those skills and also massed extreme fire power throughout their two week training period at Ft. Chaffee, Ark.

Capt. David Rollow, of Norman, Headquarters Company Commander, 1st Battalion, 279th Infantry said, "This year at Ft. Chaffee, our headquarters Soldiers are training in a convoy live fire exercise. Our maintenance Soldiers, cooks, communications guys – all the support Soldiers are getting the chance to shoot at targets from vehicles, engage targets with an M50 machine gun, fire M16 rifles and multiple weapons systems."

During the brigade training the 700th Support Battalion defended the Battalion Support Area (BSA), handled several mass casualty operations, provided water purification, conducted land navigation and combat lifesaver training during the two week annual training period. Maj. Ted Ware, of Edmond, said "The medics of Company C have been treating Soldiers for heat injuries, sprained ankles, bug bites, infections and stress during the training period."

Sgt. Jared Campos, of Yukon, a medic with Company C said, "During the training period we have treated patients, practiced tri-age, stabilized patients,

provided follow-up care and moved out Soldiers who needed higher echelons of care. The mass casualty exercise provided great training."

While the 700th Support Battalion provided support – the infantry and field artillery battalions used Ft. Chaffee's large maneuver training areas to train and fire weapons. "We fired over 300 artillery rounds in two days," said 1st Lt. Nathan Richter, of Mustang, Executive Officer for Battery C, 1st Battalion, 160th Field Artillery. The battalion occupied the field and held tactical operations occupying positions,



moving to new locations, setting up and firing the M105 howitzer. Since Operation Noble Eagle in June 2004 – this is the first time the entire battalion has trained on field artillery skills, said Richter.

The 160th Field Artillery Battalion used the Army Field Artillery Tactical Data System to facilitate accurate feedback, adjust fire and for massing fire on targets. This was the first annual training period to use the new digital equipment, said 1st Lt. Eric Long, of Jones, Battery C Commander, 160th Field Artillery.

The 1st Battalion, 279th Infantry trained on mortar walk and shoot, convoy live fires, village attacks, air assaults from Ft. Chaffee to Camp Gruber, sniper training, land navigation and combative training. Staff Sgt. Brook Koch, of Cleveland, Company D, 1st Battalion, 279th Infantry said, "Our primary focus has been the convoy live fire – the way urban combat is fought – we have focused on it for the entire training year."

Thirty lucky Soldiers fired the AT 4 – anti-tank weapon while at Ft. Chaffee. Soldiers received instructions prior to

safely and securely to react to an IED. The drills are to get personnel out of the area as soon as possible." The Calvary troop used lanes at Ft. Chaffee where they encountered civilians on the battlefield, explosives, ambushes and enemy fire. "We had a lot to do in a very short amount of time, but the opposing forces, (OPFOR), gave us the benefit of feedback," said Sgt. Richard Hardiman, of Stillwater. Hardiman, an Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran, said the Ft. Chaffee maneuver area environment has narrow streets, bypasses and is a good maneuver area for vehicles.

During the last week of training the 45th Infantry Brigade conducted a large Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise (CALFEX). All elements on the battlefield kicked off the massing of firepower in the early morning hours, maneuvered and fired throughout the day. Maj. Michael Dale, of Perry, said "Our company commanders utilized their organic assets for the exercise and maneuvered their elements on the battlefield during the live fire exercise." The maneuver assets combined with the brigade assets for a large show of

firing the light anti-tank weapon. Spc. Jeremy Quinn, of Vinita, Company B, 1st Battalion, 279th Infantry commented "I didn't get to shoot one at Ft. Benning during my initial training, it's pretty cool and has one hecka of a concussion blast."

The most forward eyes on the battlefield belonged to Troop E, 145th Calvary headquartered in McAlester. The Troop provided route and security clearance, reacted to IEDs and ambushes, and cordoned-off and searched a village. Cadet Kenneth Foale, of Norman, said "It's our intent to have the platoon work together

firepower which included: 60 and 81 millimeter mortars, machine guns, rifles, and TOW missiles. National Guard Bureau provided us with the opportunity to fire TOW missiles, which cost around \$5300 a shot, an opportunity which doesn't come around very often, said Dale.

"Our Soldiers have conducted safe and realistic training in large maneuver environment. The CALFEX provided a great training event and the attitude and morale of the Soldiers has been high," said Brig. Gen. Myles Deering, commander of the 45th Infantry Brigade.

45th FA Brigade, MLRS light up sky during AT '06

by Sgt. 1st Class Darren D. Heusel, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
Nearly 500 members of the 45th Field Artillery Brigade got a jump on Independence Day festivities by filling the sky with the red glare of their rockets during their annual training exercise June 3-17.

The brigade's annual training was highlighted by several live-fire exercises featuring the M270 Multiple Launch Rocket System and culminating with a cookout honoring family members and employers for their continued support of the National Guard.

"This is just our way of saying thank you for supporting us, especially at this important time during the global war on terror and with the number of deployments we've had recently," said 45th Field Artillery Brigade Commander Col. Robert Roshell.

"The patriotism of our young Soldiers is to be commended," he added. "For a lot of them, this is their first time out and they are getting a taste of what the field artillery is all about, which is to deliver rocket power on our enemy."

The brigade's emphasis for this year was to conduct aggressive battery, battalion and brigade-level exercises and hone their basic individual field artillery skills, which are to move, shoot and communicate.

The simultaneous operation involved two battalions – the 158th Field Artillery Battalion, headquartered in Lawton, and the 171st Field Artillery Battalion, headquartered in Altus, as well as brigade assets from their headquarters in Enid.

It also required a great deal of planning and synchronization, with the objective of the training scenario to turn back Red Forces consisting of extremists who have gained control of Oklahoma's strategic Army and Air Force/Guard facilities.

Lt. Col. Doug Brown, 158th Field Artillery Battalion Commander, said his Soldiers were meeting and exceeding his training objectives, despite having more than 150 troops deployed to Iraq to assist with the security forces mission in and around Baghdad.

As a result, Brown has been forced to get creative by pulling Soldiers from three firing batteries to make up a single "Phoenix" battery.

"To the best of my knowledge, this is the first time we have taken the remainder of three firing batteries and put them together as a composite firing battery and had them train together in a short period of time, certify the crews and then conduct a live-fire exercise," he said.

Brown went on to say his Soldiers' performance under adverse conditions says a lot about the Citizen Soldier, referring to them as "a package deal" because of their ability to stand out as a civilian and as a Soldier.

"I think the taxpayer is getting a lot of bang for their buck for what these Citizen

think about what they are doing out here and realize that they could be doing this in a real combat operation," he said. "They need to think about these things and how they would react.

"That's what we really train for – to be prepared. I've found that if you aggressively train, you bring out the best in the Soldiers and the motivation and morale stays very high."

The Guardsmen got an added morale boost June 8 when they received word while in the field that al-Qaeda's top operative in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, had been killed by U.S. and coalition forces.

Gen. George Casey, Commander of Multi-National Forces in Iraq, said Zarqawi and one of his key lieutenants, spiritual advisor Sheik Abd-Al-Rahman, were killed

June 7 in an air strike against "an identified, isolated safe house near Baghdad."

This annual training period proved to be bittersweet for Col. Roshell because it marked the last time the 45th Field Artillery Brigade will conduct a live-fire exercise with the 171st Field Artillery Battalion and the 158th Field Artillery Battalion. The process is already under way to transform the 45th FA Brigade into one of seven FIRES brigades nationwide.

Starting next year, the 171st will transition into the

271st Brigade Support Battalion, providing everything from beans to bullets and everything in between to the 45th FIRES Brigade.

It also marked the last time the 158th will use the "12-pack" MLRS tracked vehicle. Starting next year, the battalion will field a new "6-pack" M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System that is expected to be more mobile.

Roshell said the effective date for transitioning to the new 45th FIRES Brigade will be October 2008.

In addition to Enid, Lawton and Altus, the 45th Field Artillery Brigade has armories in Anadarko, Chickasha, Clinton, Duncan, Elk City, Hobart, Mangum, Marlow and Walters.



Photo: Sgt. 1st Class Darren Heusel

Soldiers are able to accomplish," he said.

Lt. Col. Paul Metcalfe, 171st Field Artillery Battalion Commander, echoed his comrade's comments, adding that training in core tasks is critical should they ever get the call to be involved in the global war on terror.

"I think the training itself is part of the fight because our level of readiness and preparedness makes us a viable asset and causes the enemy to reconsider some of the things it might do," he said.

As part of the training scenario, Metcalfe and other leaders incorporated insurgents and improvised explosive devices to closely resemble those real-world situations taking place in Afghanistan and Iraq.

"That's causing our Soldiers to really

90th Troop Command takes ‘to the field’ for annual training

by Sgt. 1st Class Darren D. Heusel,
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

In keeping with his command philosophy of “see and be seen,” 90th Troop Command Commander Col. Kenneth Moore relished the rare opportunity to take his Oklahoma National Guard headquarters element “to the field” for their two-week annual training June 10-24.

While at the National Guard training site, Col. Moore’s charges were able to hone their individual and collective Soldier skills in a variety of different areas including land navigation, convoy operations and water survival, to name a few.

The training was highlighted by two days of intense Military Operations on Urban Terrain, or MOUT, training at Camp Gruber’s esteemed Liberty Village, a mock village established for just such events.

“It’s a little unusual for our headquarters to go to the field, but this training is extremely important,” said Col. Moore, an Enid resident whose diverse command includes everything from aviation, transportation and medical personnel to engineers, band members and public affairs specialists.

Col. Moore said he chose to come to Camp Gruber this year to give his staff, which consists of a lot of new faces, an op-

portunity to work together on a daily basis.

“We want to get them into the mindset and training mode together and they do work well together,” he said. “Everything we’re doing this week is very important, especially the MOUT training.”

Col. Moore said the MOUT training is a refresher for many of his Soldiers because they’ve already conducted it on real-world missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“They are subject matter experts so to speak,” he said. “We also have subject matter experts from the civilian world. We have highway patrolmen, sheriff’s deputies, city policemen...those Soldiers are very knowledgeable and the two skill sets effectively intertwine.”

For the newer Soldiers, Col. Moore said the training is invaluable because it is extremely applicable in today’s operating environment.

Col. Moore went on to say the training builds camaraderie among the troops, which is important in a combat situation.

“Everything we’re doing is related to the global war on terrorism,” he said.

“Whether it be paperwork, handling ammunition or working on vehicles. Things changed dramatically after 9-11, but the Soldiers have really stepped up

when called upon.

“We’ve had a large percentage of this command that has deployed as units or as individuals. But they couldn’t have done it without the support of their families and their employers.”

With the ongoing war in Iraq and Afghanistan and despite what some might say, Col. Moore said recruiting and retention throughout the Guard is going quite well.

“There are incentives that we offer as Guardsmen that are unmatched such as free tuition to state supported schools as well as enlistment bonuses and re-enlistment bonuses,” he said. “These are smart people we’re dealing with and a lot of them are looking for a way to pay for college.”

For some Guardsmen, Col. Moore said it is a way of life.

“There is a legacy in the Guard and in some cases it’s a family tradition,” he said. “Some family members have even deployed together.”

So, whether it’s in New Orleans in the wake of a hurricane, in the urban cities of Iraq or the rugged terrain of Afghanistan, Col. Moore said the training at Camp Gruber further prepares his troops to perform their dual mission wherever and whenever called upon.

Mobile chuck wagon delivers food, fun to troops in field

by Sgt. 1st Class Darren D. Heusel,
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

When it comes to troop morale, four Soldiers from 90th Troop Command are “Top Dog!”

During their annual training June 10-24, Maj. Mark Clifton and Maj. Asa Stamps of Edmond, Master Sgt. Jeffrey Johnson of Oklahoma City and Master Sgt. Trice Clark of Del City could be found delivering food – and fun – to the troops in the field.

The food came in the form of freshly grilled hot dogs, bratwurst and hot links and the fun was generally the result of taking a break from the normal lunch routine – usually a heater meal or meal ready to eat, otherwise known as a MRE.

“It gets us out to see the Soldiers,” said Col. Kenneth Moore of Enid, 90th Troop Command commander and chief

chef. “Yeah, it’s hot. But it’s a lot of fun.”

Every day around lunch time, Sergeant Johnson and his helpers would take Colonel Moore’s delectable delights to various locations around camp. Once on site, he and Major Stamps could be heard bantering back and forth, “One JJ Special,” “One MB Special,” “One Triple S” or “One Nothing Special Special.”

That dialogue let Sergeant Johnson, command supply noncommissioned officer-in-charge, know what to serve up – whether it be a pair of hot dogs, chips and a drink, a bratwurst, chips and a drink, one hot dog, chips and a drink or just a link n’ bun only.

Major Clifton, command admin officer, admitted he got the idea from the 45th Infantry Brigade, but he said his crew took the idea to a whole new level.

“We started talking about it at the military ball,” said Sergeant Johnson,

who sported a “Grill Sergeant” T-shirt along with his Army Combat Uniform trousers and desert boots. “People thought that was pretty cool.”

Major Clifton said the money raised through the sale of the hot dogs goes back into a morale, welfare and recreation fund to support the troops.

“This really is a win-win deal,” said Sergeant Clark, command admin sergeant. “We’re raising money for a good cause and the Soldiers really appreciate it. They look forward to us coming and they’re glad to see us.”

Major Stamps, command supply officer, said the effort also offers the Soldiers a break from the normal ration.

“And, they’re getting a lot of bang for their buck,” he said. “The cost is really low and they don’t have to stare at a brown bag all day. It’s a lot of work and it’s very hot work, but it’s a lot of fun.”

700th Support Battalion defend 'BSA' during AT 2006

Story and photos by 1st Lt. Tiffany Beasley, OKARNG Office of Public Affairs

Most of the Soldiers from the 45th Infantry Brigade's 700th Support Battalion begin their duty day, on the 13th of June like any other, but today is not just another day . . . at the front gate of the Battalion Support Area (BSA) a situation is evolving that is anything but normal.

The Soldiers guarding the front entrance into the BSA notice a group of civilians walking toward them with what appears to be an explosive device. Immediately the day changes from routine to heightened intensity. The guards must determine in a matter of seconds the intention of the group – friend or foe -- fire or hold fire.

Such is the beginning of a new training day for the Soldiers of the 700th during their 2006 annual training period at Ft. Chaffee, Ark. They not only receive training to keep their military occupation skills (MOS) current but learn new essential battlefield skills developed by U.S. forces after years of combat in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The training described above serves as a blue print on the rules of engagement in a combat zone for the men and women of the battalion. Instructors for the training are Iraq and Afghanistan combat veterans from the Infantry Brigade.

The Soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan realize one of the newest obstacles faced by Soldiers is how to interact with the civilian populace while in a combat zone. They must learn how to identify if a civilian is friendly or a possible enemy threat and how to treat them with the least amount of force necessary and the

Members of the 700th Support Battalion stand guard over a captured insurgent during Battalion Support Area defense training. The training was conducted at Ft. Chaffee, Ark., during the 45th Infantry Brigade's Annual Training period.



least amount of risk to themselves.

The training is realistic and purposeful for the 700 Support Soldiers.

Spc. Dawn Taylor, of Edmond, a truck driver with Company A, 700th Support Battalion in the petroleum, oil, lubricant (POL) platoon believes in the training. "I enjoy my job and like this training," she said. "Training on the rules of engagement is very important because in a real-world situation we will have to deal with the civilian populace and we will have to be able to determine who is friendly and who might want to do us harm."

Spc. Stephanie Foster, a medical laboratory technician with Company C, thinks the training is awesome. "It is more intense than previous training I have received," Foster said. "We are being trained on security and our lack of it. We are being taught where we need to improve."

Soldiers from the 180th Infantry Battalion masquerade as the "civilians" for this

exercise. Many are Operation Enduring Freedom veterans. Their mission while at Ft. Chaffee is to present units of the brigade with real-world training scenarios by providing Soldiers to serve as civilians on the battlefield or enemy Soldiers to attack 45th Infantry Brigade positions at Ft. Chaffee.

Sgt. Bruce Mitchell from the 180th served in Iraq for 16 months, "It is good and essential training for these Soldiers in the event they are called to deploy," he said. "Unit security has improved a lot since day one. It is really important to know how to deal with the civilian because in Iraq the Iraqis come up to the Soldiers all the time."

The 700th Support Soldiers are observed and evaluated by Observer Controllers (OC). One of the OCs, said, "We watch the interaction and point out correct and incorrect actions taken. We use the Soldier's mistakes as a training tool and after a few days the Soldiers begin to improve. If they are going to make a mistake this is the time to make it."

Lt. Col. Tonya Chase, 700th Support Battalion Commander said, "It is important our Soldiers learn how to defend an area of operation and know what to do when the chips are down," she continues, "I am confident in their skills and know that they will make the right decisions if the time comes."

the 700th Support Battalion is the 45th Infantry Brigade's lifeline. Comprised of three companies they support the entire 45th Infantry Brigade and its battalions with rations, fuel, water, ammunition, medical care and evacuation and vehicle maintenance.



A member of the 700th Support Battalion kills two insurgents and captures a third during Battalion Support Area defense training. The training has been modeled after real-world scenarios in Afghanistan and Iraq and is intended to prepare soldiers for future deployments.

Live-fire exercises drive Infantry Battalion's training

by Sgt. 1st Class Vincent Donaldson,
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Camouflaged faces streaked with warrior colors move in disciplined order through the gathering shadows. Second Lt. John Baxter Ballard III of Oklahoma City sends a hand signal ordering a security halt.

Soldiers quickly take a knee, setting up a 360-degree perimeter as the lieutenant receives a radio update from his reconnaissance elements who have "eyes on" the objective.

1st platoon, A Company, 1st Battalion, 179th Infantry headquartered in Stillwater is preparing to attack a fortified position consisting of a trench line and bunkers with live rounds.

The training scenario has been carefully rehearsed for days, first with dry walkthroughs, then with blank rounds and finally, when every battle drill and safety measure has been engrained, the event culminated with live rounds on the objective.

This scene and many more like it were played out time and time again by the 1/179 during the Oklahoma Army National Guard unit's two-week annual training June 10-24.

"Our objective is a series of live-fire exercises that will culminate with platoon proficiency at

live-fire operations, both for my infantry and anti-armor companies," said Lt. Col. Monty Brodt of Oklahoma City, commander of the 1/179.

On day one of the training, Soldiers from the 1/179 were thrown into tactical training scenarios replicating a variety of combat situations. During a Military Operations on Urban Terrain, or MOUT, training scenario, a "Shoot House" with full size pop-up manikins dressed as insurgents brought the primary elements of the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan into focus.

On the hill above the Shoot House, "Delta Platoon" fires its full range of weapons from Mark 19 grenade launchers and 50-caliber machine guns to anti-tank missiles.

Prior to each operation, individual companies will take their turn at the ranges, training their Soldiers in basic infantry tasks leading up to a collective platoon-level live-fire scenario.

"We started building block procedures, starting with our M4 rifle qualification and zeroing our weapons," said 1/179 Command Sgt. Major Dean Bridges of Nowata. "Then, we conducted buddy team and fire team live-fires. That all builds until we get to the squad. From the squad, we went to platoon-level live-fires.

It allows us to hit every stepping block in between.

"We are also able to concentrate on individual tasks that support all those missions. It's a domino. It's a stair step, one step at a time."

The shrill sound of a whistle cuts through the woods as the staccato crack of heavy machine guns rattle from the "support by fire" element in the distance. Ballard calls for the "green star cluster" and his men charge through the breached outer trench line defenses.

Observer controller's and range safety officers watch from above as the troops execute their mission with the sound of gunfire and shouted orders of simulated combat ringing in the background.

"The end state is our Soldiers will have qualified with their individual weapons, which then culminates to a 'clear a trench line' exercise using all the direct fire weapons systems the infantry has," said Brodt.

"We have to be prepared to respond to our federal mission," he added. "That means most of the training focuses on the weapons systems, which obviously could be utilized in support of

▣ Continued on page 14

National Guardsman takes love for drums to Scottish pipe band

by Sgt. 1st Class Darren D. Heusel,
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Oklahoma Army National Guard Sgt. Tim Vermillion is committed to doing his part in the Global War on Terror by playing drums for the 145th Army Band in Oklahoma City.

However, when the Norman resident isn't honoring his commitment to Uncle Sam, he's taking his love of percussion in a different direction as a member of the Westminster Pipe Band now known nationwide for their Scottish brand of music.

That's because the Westminster Pipe Band recently competed in the U.S. Pipe Band Championships in Alma, Mich., and outperformed more than ten other bands to bring the championship home to Oklahoma.

"Our drum line had only played together three times before that, so that's quite an accomplishment considering some of the other bands had been playing together for years," Vermillion said. "They weren't really expecting us (up there)."

"In fact, when they introduced us, they said, 'Here's a band from...somewhere in Oklahoma.' They kept referring to us as 'hayseeds.'

None of us had matching kilts, so we looked like the dirty dozen."



Sgt. Tim Vermillion and his wife, Spc. Lena Vermillion, practice their drumming during drill at the 90th Troop Command Headquarters in Oklahoma City. Photo: Sgt. 1st Class Darren Heusel

That was before Vermillion and his band took the stage. Afterwards, the accolades started pouring in, beginning the day before when the band competed in the Alma Highland Games and won the Midwest Pipe Band Association Grade IV competition.

The band rehearses their music at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Oklahoma City because pipe major, Bruce Robertson, a world-class piper who has played in pipe bands all over the world, is a member there.

"We also rehearse at Hafer Park in Edmond when the weather's nice," Vermillion said.

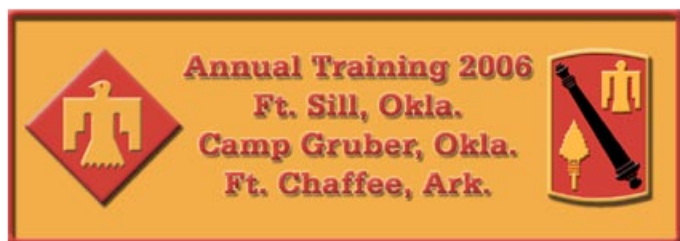
Vermillion said Robertson has been teaching bagpipe lessons in the local area for years and decided to form his own band about two years ago.

"It's sort of an all-star band with the best players from all over the local area," Vermillion said.

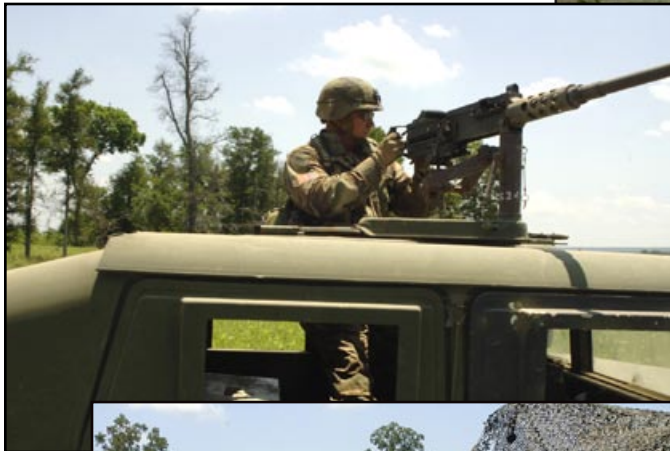
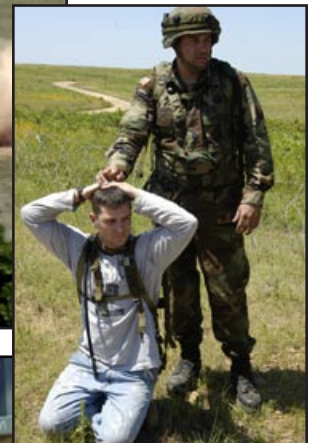
Vermillion said he joined the band after receiving an e-mail from Robertson.

"Bruce got me the best training available – world-class instruction, plane tickets, you

▣ Continued on page 12



Photos: Maj. Rhonda McGuire, 1st Lt. Geoff Legler, 1st Lt. Tiffany Beasley, Sgt. 1st Class Darren Heusel, Spc. Jason Hinton, Pfc. Brian Allen



Bond-Leahy Amendment To Boost National Guard Accepted

WASHINGTON - U.S. Sens. Kit Bond (R-Mo.) and Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), co-chairs of the Senate National Guard Caucus, announced Tues (Jun 20th) that their amendment to empower the Guard within the Pentagon has been accepted by the bill's managers and will become part of the defense authorization bill currently being considered on the Senate floor.

"The Senate has taken a bold step in ensuring that the National Guard will have substantive muscle commensurate with their contributions to our nation's security," said Bond. "Our job is not yet complete, however. Now the focus will be on the conference deliberations. The House version of the defense bill has no similar provision so it is critical that supporters of this provision work diligently to educate House and Senate conferees on the merits of the legislation which are many and long overdue.

"The Guard is a 21st Century military organization, carrying its weight and more in Afghanistan and Iraq, and here at home whenever disaster strikes," said Leahy. "But today's Guard is needlessly frozen in a 20th Century Pentagon organization chart. The implications of that show up in everything from the Guard's depleted equipment stockpiles, to training and staffing and mission decisions. Our amendment clears away some institutional cobwebs to let the National Guard be the best it can be. Grass-

roots support from the Guard community has helped us get this far, and grassroots support will be crucial in getting this legislation through conference and across the finish line, in the face of the Old Guard institutional resistance that will continue to work against these reforms. Senator Bond and I will push hard to the goal. We know that Congress can't afford to let our Guard down."

The Bond-Leahy amendment will ensure that the nation's citizen-Soldiers and Airmen have access to the highest levels of the Department of Defense and that key policy decisions impacting the Guard and the states are heard and taken into account.

The amendment involves four central elements:

- * Give the Guard more muscle within the Pentagon by elevating the Chief of the National Guard to a four-star position;
- * Direct that the Deputy Commander of U.S. Northern Command be a member of the National Guard to ensure that planning at NORCOM better encompasses the interests of the National Guard;
- * Give the National Guard Bureau the ability to identify and validate equipment needs essential to its mission;
- * Allow the National Guard Bureau to establish more direct lines of communication with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, states and federal

agencies.

The National Guard has a long history of assisting America's military abroad while providing support and security at home. Since the attacks of 9/11, the National Guard has taken on even greater responsibilities in the realm of homeland security.

Despite this, the National Guard currently has only 35 percent of its required equipment levels. Last year, Leahy and Bond led successful efforts in the Senate to increase equipment funding for the National Guard by almost \$1 billion.

Bond and Leahy pointed out that these citizen-Soldiers are a tremendous value for the capabilities they provide. The Guard makes up almost half of the Total Force in the War on Terror and is a critical component of civilian defense and emergency response here at home for as little as 4.5 percent of the defense budget.

Bond and Leahy noted that despite the critical role the Guard plays in national defense at home and abroad, there are many obstacles that prevent the force from reaching its full potential. Earlier this year the Army proposed significant cuts to Guard troop strength. Bond and Leahy led the Senate opposition and the Pentagon backtracked on their plans to scale back the Guard's force structure after the Senators organized broad opposition -- more than 75 senators -- to the plan.

New Command Sergeant Major for the National Guard Bureau

Command Sgt. Maj. David R. Hudson, NGAK, has been selected for the position of Command Sergeant Major for the National Guard Bureau. He will succeed Command Sgt. Maj. John Leonard in August 2006, upon Leonard's retirement.

Hudson's military career spans some 32 years, including ten years in the Air Force and Air Force Reserve. His various assignments include Intelligence NCO for the 297th Infantry Battalion, First

Sergeant, Battalion Sergeant Major, and Commandant of the 207th Regiment Regional Training Institute. He was the first Alaska traditional Soldier to become the State Command Sergeant Major.

His public service extends beyond his military career. He has over 20 years of law enforcement experience as an Alaska State Trooper, where he holds the rank of Captain and last served as the Commander of the Criminal Investigative Bureau.

Hudson's outstanding record is further demonstrated by his extensive educational background which includes a Master of Science degree in Organizational Management.

A formal press release from NGB Public Affairs will be forthcoming. The Soldiers and Airmen of the National Guard look forward to working with Command Sgt. Maj. Hudson in the near future.



**Don't miss the
2006 EANGUS Conference
Salt Lake City, Utah
August 20 - 23**



Guard presence grows on southern U.S. border with Mexico

About 800 National Guard troops have arrived for duty in four U.S. border states as Operation Jump Start gets under way.

The Guard members reported to Arizona, California, New Mexico and Texas to support the U.S. Border Patrol and are expected to begin their missions by next week, Michael Friel, a U.S. Customs and Border Protection spokesman, said this week.

"They're in various stages of in-processing," Mr. Friel said. Some command-and-control elements are already standing up a joint task force, and many of the operators are expected to be working within days, he

said.

Paul McHale, assistant secretary for homeland defense, and Lt. Gen. H Steven Blum, National Guard Bureau chief, traveled to the region June 13 for two days of site visits and coordination, according to Air Force Lt. Col. Tracy O'Grady, a Pentagon spokesperson.

Arizona Gov. Janet Napolitano placed a conference call June 13 to thank troops supporting the border security mission for taking time away from their families and jobs. "We need your help," she told them.

President Bush announced plans to

temporarily boost the National Guard's contribution to U.S. border security in mid-May. Under the president's plan, up to 6,000 National Guard members will provide mobile communications, transportation, logistics, training and construction support to the U.S. Border Patrol.

Guard officials expect to have about 2,500 troops along the border by the end of this month. The Guardsmen will not play a law enforcement role, officials emphasized. During the mission's second year, Guard participation is expected to drop to 3,000 or less.

Data Theft Included Nearly a Half Million National Guard Records

The situation surrounding the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) records theft in May went from bad to worse this week when the VA announced Tuesday that the records included information on 430,000 National Guardsmen. The records also included information on 1.1 million active component members and more than 600,000 Reservists.

Veterans who have never filed a VA claim are also at risk, since the VA gets information on all who served directly from the Defense Department. This is a practice in place since the 1970s.

More specific, those discharged after 1975 are most at risk, but the VA estimates that the theft also could affect anyone who ever filed a VA claim, since the VA often entered historical records on others who might have discharged before 1975.

VA Secretary James Nicholson first told reporters May 22 that a VA analyst—not authorized to remove the data from the VA—took computer files home to work on a project. In early May, burglars broke into the employee's home and stole his laptop computer containing the information.

"There is no indication at this time at all that any use is being made of this data, or even that [the burglars] know they have it," Mr. Nicholson said. "But considering the pros and cons of going public with this ... we've decided to come down on the side of ... making our veterans aware."

VA officials encourage any veteran to visit www.firstgov.gov for detailed information about the theft and for ways to prevent subsequent problems.

The biggest concern is that the information could be used for nefarious acts such as identity theft. But there have been no reports of ill use thus far.

In addition, officials announced this week VA is revamping its data security procedures as a result of the theft.

Also, all VA employees must complete privacy and cyber security training by June 30. The VA assembled a task force of senior leadership to review all aspects of information security and assess which employees need access to certain data, and the agency has suspended the practice of allowing veterans benefits employees from removing claimant files from agency work areas.

During the week of June 26, VA facilities across the country and in Guam and Puerto Rico will take part in security awareness training. VA is also going through a security review to make sure its anti-virus software is updated and current, and will remove all unauthorized programs and software from employee computers.

Mr. Nicholson also discussed the difficulty in punishing employee's misconduct.

"I believe the policies we have and the legislation under which they are promulgated is generally adequate. But it is too hard in my opinion to discipline people in the civil service," he said. "I think we should consider putting ... teeth into an enforcement mechanism for careless and negligent handling of personal information."

He also noted the employee who had his laptop stolen had not had a background check in 32 years.

YOUR GUARD HISTORY

June 18, 1944: In Kewilin, China, members of Connecticut's 118th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, formerly the Guard's 118th Observation Squadron, begin flying missions as part of the 23rd Fighter Group.

This group was an outgrowth of the Flying Tigers, who gained great prewar fame as an elite American unit of volunteer pilots fighting the Japanese. While flying over enemy lines, the 118th was often engaged by Japanese fighters.

During the course of World War II, the squadron produced five pilots earning the designation of "ace," meaning they single-handedly shot down at least five enemy aircraft.

Four other Guard observation squadrons also served in the China-Burma-India theater. These included Pennsylvania's 103rd, California's 115th, Oregon's 123rd, and Kansas' 127th.





My Boss is a Patriot Day

"Thanks so much for inviting me", "I didn't realize these Soldiers do so much during their Annual Training", "I have a whole new respect for my employee after today". Those are just some of the comments we heard from employers at the My Boss is a Patriot Day, an MLRS live fire conducted by the 1st Battalion, 158th Field Artillery and 1st Battalion, 171st Field Artillery on June 10th at Ft. Sill. This event was quite possibly the most successful Boss Trip the Oklahoma ESGR Committee has conducted. Sixty employers, supervisors, managers signed up for the trip. Each had an employee serving in the sponsoring Battalions. Our event was held in conjunction with the Battalions' Family Day, so employers had the opportunity to visit with their Soldiers' family as well.

The Oklahoma ESGR Committee asked Soldiers from the Battalions to invite their employers (bosses) to attend a day of Annual Training to get an idea of what Guardsmen do at AT. We did this to help employers better understand the technical, tactical, and leadership skills these Soldiers are trained in and execute very professionally.

The ESGR Committee simply provided the commercial busses, MRE lunches, and bottled water for the employers, the actual event was the task of the 45th Field Artillery Brigade and the two FA Battalions. The Brigade, Battalion, and Battery commanders, their NCO's and Soldiers jumped on this event and put on one of the

most professional displays of the Guard in action that I have ever seen.

The event started with a welcome from Maj. Gen. Harry Wyatt, The Adjutant General for Oklahoma, and a short overview brief from Col. Robert Roshell, the 45th FA Brigade Commander. From there we bussed the employers and families to the range where members of the Battalions presented a static display of weapons and a rolling display of all vehicles in the Battalions. The finale was a live fire of 36 MLRS rockets.

As the vehicles rolled by and stopped in front of the bleachers, each crewman was introduced. You could see the employers turn to one another, point with pride, and say "that Soldier works for me". The Battalion Food Service Soldiers provided hamburgers and hotdogs for the families and the employers.

I ask all commanders, Army and Air, to get with your staff and subordinate commanders and come up with an event that would let the employers of your unit members really see and understand what the outstanding men and women do. I guarantee that if you give the boss an opportunity to see these Soldiers and Airmen in action, you will create a staunch supporter of the Oklahoma National Guard.

The Oklahoma ESGR Committee has funds specifically provided to us from National ESGR to put together trips for employers. Many times we have taken employers to active duty bases, Army, Navy or Air Force. They have always been impressed with America's Armed Forces in action, but this is the first time they have specifically seen their employee perform for our country. I encourage you to strengthen the "three legged stool of support" which is unit, family, and job that allows Soldiers to continue their military career by letting us support a My Boss is a Patriot Day for you.



Scottish pipe band

Continued from page 7

name it," he said. "Once we got the band together, I knew we were going to be really good. I was eaten up with it, practicing three times a day."

Vermillion said once he was on board, they started advertising for three more drummers and found them.

"They're actually all from Texas," he said. "One of them is a world-class drummer from Ireland. He's been training us and kind of taken us under his wing."

Vermillion said the band gets together almost every weekend, especially when they are getting geared up for a performance.

"We recently competed in a competition in Houston and won," he said. "From there, we went to the Alma Highland Games."

Vermillion said he started playing drums in the sixth grade. He's been a member of the 145th Army Band since 1994. He said he got interested in pipe bands after watching TV one day and saw a program about making bagpipes.

"I thought it would be neat to join a pipe band," said Vermillion, adding that National Guard bands are authorized bagpipes and kilts.

Next up for the band is the North American Championships in Maxeville, Ontario, Canada, or the Stone Mountain Games in Georgia. There's also the Tulsa Games in Tulsa, Okla., Vermillion said.

Vermillion's wife, Spc. Lena Vermillion, is a flutist in the 145th Army Band and also a tenor drummer in the first pipe band he joined.

But, Vermillion said, "she'll be joining us before our next competition."

For more information about the band, go to westminsterpipeband.org.



Sgt. Tim Vermillion and his wife, Spc. Lena Vermillion, are both members of the 145th Army Band and the Westminster Pipe Band. Photo: Sgt. 1st Class Darren Heusel



Reflection

By CH (CPT) Brad Hanna
JFHQ Full-Time Support Chaplain

Military Leaders in Scripture- David

"But be not thou far from me, O LORD:
O my strength, haste thee to help me."

"Blessed be the LORD my strength,
which teacheth my hands to war, and my
fingers to fight: My goodness, and my
fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer;
my shield, and he in whom I trust; who
subdueth my people under me."

"O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be
ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over
me."

You may remember the quotes above
from the movie Saving Private Ryan. Private
Jackson, the squad sniper, spoke these words

as he carefully lined up his shots with his
rifle. He carefully and methodically chose
his targets, zeroed in and squeezed the
trigger.

What you may not know is that these
words were spoken...and written by another
warrior centuries earlier: David. These
same words can be found in Psalms 22:19,
144:1-2 and 25:2.

Perhaps there is no greater warrior in the
sacred text than David. After his anointing
by Samuel he found himself before King
Saul to encourage Saul through music. As
David was introduced he was described as a
"mighty man of valor, a warrior" (1 Samuel
16:18).

In his first public display of his battle
skills, David stood before Goliath "in the
name of the LORD of hosts." There he
defeated a much larger, better equipped
Soldier in one-on-one combat. As he fought
more battles and progressed into a place

of leadership the people sang his praises,
"Saul has slain his thousands, and David
his ten thousands" (1 Sam. 18:7). David was
successful in battle both before and during
his reign as King of Israel.

From where did his great military
strength and ability come? It was the
warrior himself who said of the LORD,
"He trains my hands for battle." David
understood his calling and from whom it
came. He was called by God to be a warrior
and king. Even when he desired to do
something that he considered "great" for
the Lord (i.e. building the Temple) God
would not allow him (2 Sam. 7). David was
a "minister to God for good" by fulfilling the
calling God had given him as a warrior.

Though we may sometimes think of
"great" things we may like to do for God,
let us not forget that we can serve God
right now through our service to country as
America's warriors.

Guard Your Benefits

By Sue Stice
JFHQ Full-Time
State Benefits Advisor (SBA)

VA to Offer Free Credit Monitoring

WASHINGTON (June 21, 2006) - As
part of the continuing efforts by the De-
partment of Veterans Affairs (VA) to pro-
tect and assist those potentially affected by
the recent data theft that occurred at an
employee's Maryland home, Secretary of
Veterans Affairs R. James Nicholson today
announced that VA will provide one year
of free credit monitoring to people whose
sensitive personal information may have
been stolen in the incident.

"VA continues to take aggressive steps
to protect and assist people who may be
potentially affected by this data theft," said
Nicholson. "VA has conducted extensive
market research on available credit moni-
toring solutions, and has been working
diligently to determine how VA can best
serve those whose information was stolen.

"Free credit monitoring will help
safeguard those who may be affected, and
will provide them with the peace of mind
they deserve," he added.

The Secretary said VA has no reason to
believe the perpetrators who committed
this burglary were targeting the data, and
Federal investigators believe that it is
unlikely that identity theft has resulted

from the data theft.

This week, VA will solicit bids from
qualified companies to provide a com-
prehensive credit monitoring solution.
VA will ask these companies to provide
expedited proposals and to be prepared
to implement them rapidly once they are
under contract.

After VA hires a credit monitoring
company, the Department will send a
detailed letter to people whose sensitive
personal information may have been
included in the stolen data. This letter will
explain credit monitoring and how eligible
people can enroll or "opt-in" for the
services. The Department expects to have
the services in place and the letters mailed
by mid-August.

Secretary Nicholson also announced VA
is soliciting bids to hire a company that
provides data-breach analysis, which will
look for possible misuse of the stolen VA
data. The analysis would help measure
the risk of the data loss, identify suspi-
cious misuse of identity information and
expedite full assistance to affected people.

As part of VA's efforts to prevent
such an incident from happening again,
Secretary Nicholson previously announced
a series of personnel changes in the Office
of Policy and Planning, where the breach
occurred; the hiring of former Mari-
copa County (Ariz.) prosecutor Richard
Romley as a Special Advisor for Informa-

tion Security; the expedited completion of
Cyber Security Awareness Training and
Privacy Awareness Training for all VA
employees; that an inventory be taken of
all positions requiring access to sensitive
VA data by June 30, 2006, to ensure that
only those employees who need such
access to do their jobs have it; that every
laptop in VA undergo a security review to
ensure that all security and virus software
is current, including the immediate
removal of any unauthorized information
or software; and that VA facilities across
the country - every hospital, Commu-
nity-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC),
regional office, national cemetery, field
office and VA's Central Office - observe
Security Awareness Week beginning June
26.

People who believe they may be affected
by the data theft can go to www.firstgov.gov for more information. VA also con-
tinues to operate a call center that people
can contact to get information about this
incident and learn more about consumer-
identity protections. That toll free number
is 1-800-FED INFO (1-800-333-4636).
The call center is operating from 8:00 am
to 9:00 pm (EDT), Monday-Saturday as
long as it is needed.

To view and download VA news release,
please visit the following Internet
address: <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel>

Military working to avoid repeat of soldier kidnapping

by Donna Miles,
American Forces Press Service
Washington D.C. - Military officials have positively identified two bodies discovered June 18 as those of two 101st Airborne Division Soldiers kidnapped at gunpoint two days earlier by masked gunmen in Iraq.

Defense Department officials today announced the deaths of Army Pfc. Thomas L. Tucker, 25, of Madras, Ore.; and Pfc. Kristian Menchaca, 23, of San Marcos, Texas. Both had been previously listed as "duty status-whereabouts unknown" after their abduction June 16.

The Soldiers were manning a checkpoint in Iraq when their unit, from the 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, came under enemy small-arms fire, defense officials said.

Army Gen. George W. Casey Jr., commander of Multinational Force Iraq, expressed condolences during a press briefing today to the families of Menchaca, Tucker and Army Spc. David J. Babineau, 25, of Springfield, Mass., who was killed during the attack.

He declined, however, to give details about how Menchaca and Tucker had been treated by their abductors. "That's something we're leaving to the families," who Casey said will be notified of the autopsy results as they are completed.

"I just don't think it's my business to be out talking about that," the general said. "That's up to them."

Casey did, however, say the deaths serve as "an indicator of the type of enemy that we are fighting."

"It's why we're there," he said. "And it's why we're fighting terrorism in Iraq, so we don't have to fight it here."

The full circumstances of the incident that led to the Soldiers' abduction is under investigation. "We're going to let the investigation run its course, and then we'll give you a full accounting when it's completed," he said.

In the meantime, units in Iraq are already taking action to ensure the incident isn't repeated. "I know commanders at every level have already gone back and revisited their procedures and reemphasized the operating procedures that they have in place to ensure that this doesn't happen," he said.

"And I'm sure we'll be informed further when the investigation is completed. We routinely go back and do that across the board."

Army raises maximum enlistment age to 42

Army News Service

Ft. Knox, KY. - The Army has raised the enlistment age to 42, made possible under provisions of the Fiscal Year 2006 National Defense Authorization Act.

The Army raised the active-duty age limit to 40 in January as an interim step while it worked out the additional medical screening requirements for recruits ages 40 to 42. Before January, an applicant could not have reached his or her 35th birthday. The Army Reserve age limit was raised from 35 to 40 in March 2005.

Raising the maximum age for Army enlistment expands the recruiting pool, provides motivated individuals an opportunity to serve and strengthens the readiness of Army units. More than 1,000 men and women over age 35 have already enlisted since the Army and Army Reserve raised their age limits to age 40.

"Experience has shown that older recruits who can meet the physical demands of Army service generally make excellent Soldiers. They are mature, motivated, loyal and patriotic, and bring with them a wealth of skills and experience to our Army," said Col. Donald Bartholomew, U.S. Army Recruiting Command Assistant Chief of Staff, G5.

"We certainly do not expect for this change to result in a large increase of recruits, however it will allow for those individuals who have the passion for service, but for whatever reason could not serve earlier in their lives, the opportunity to serve the nation now, when the time is right for them," he added.

All applicants must meet eligibility standards, to include passing the physical standards and medical examinations; however those 40 to 42 will be given additional medical screening.

For Shannon D. Morris, 36, of Shreveport, La., enlisting in the U.S. Army was a dream-come-true. She said she had wanted to join since she was a teenager but she didn't get the chance.

"My brother was in the Army and it was always something that I wanted to do," she said. "My father encouraged me to do it, but I became a mother at a young age and that took the priority."

Morris thought she had lost her chance, but learned that the Army had raised its age limit when her son, Robert McLain, began talking with an Army recruiter. She said the more her son talked about his decision, the more interested she became in doing something for

herself.

"When Robert told me I might still be young enough, the wheels started turning and I thought this might just be my last opportunity to get the benefits for my education and see the world."

Morris said her family was surprised she wanted to enlist and serve, but they are supportive of her plans. Her mother thought it was a great idea and her husband Rick, a district fire chief who will retire this summer, encouraged her as well.

"My brother thought I was crazy," she joked. "But he also thought it was great that I was doing it, and I couldn't believe how supportive everyone was of me. It made me proud to know that they were all behind me."

Morris, who will be a petroleum lab specialist, left for basic combat training May 25 and McLain followed May 30 to Fort Benning, Ga., where he began training to become a Ranger.

Recruits of all ages are eligible for the same enlistment bonuses and other incentives based on their individual qualifications.

Sound Off...What do you think? Join the discussion.

Live fire exercise

Continued from page 7

the Global War on Terrorism."

Brodt also has an anti-armor company conducting a major combined arms live-fire exercise at Fort Chaffee, Ark., where some of the weapons his charges will be firing include anti-tank missiles, 50-caliber machine guns,

105 millimeter artillery pieces and 81 millimeter mortars.

"I really like that live-fire...because of the adrenalin and the reality there is to muzzle awareness," said Spc. Matt Deselms of Vici. "With live rounds, it's training, yes. But it's also real."

Deselms went on to say he is so impressed

with the training and with his experiences in the Guard thus far that he's decided to reenlist for six more years.

"Roger," he said, meaning that's affirmative. "I'm a 'lifer.'"

In addition to Stillwater, the 1/179 has armories in Alva, Guthrie, Minco, Oklahoma City, Perry, Ponca City and Woodward.



The recent security breach at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs affects 26.5 million American veterans and active military service members. The stolen information could enable a thief to obtain credit in your name and ruin your financial profile. If you fear your personal information may have been compromised -- take action! Only you can secure your financial future.

- 1 ■** To find out if your information has been compromised, contact the hotline set up by the Department of Veterans Affairs at **(800) 333-4636** or online at **www.firstgov.gov**.
- 2 ■** If your information has been compromised, request a copy of your credit report. By law, you are entitled to receive a **free** credit report every 12 months from each of the three major credit bureaus. Receive the free reports by calling **(877) 322-8228** or by logging on to **www.annualcreditreport.com**. Reports can also be requested by writing **Annual Credit Report Request Service, P.O. Box 105281, Atlanta, GA 30348-5281**.
- 3 ■** Cancel or change any accounts that may have been compromised. Request that a fraud report be placed in your credit bureau file. Dispute errors or any unauthorized use of your credit, in writing, at the credit bureau where the error appears. The contact information for the credit bureaus is as follows:
 - * **Equifax:** Call (800) 525-6285, or write: P.O. Box 740241, Atlanta, GA 30374-0241
 - * **Experian:** Call (888) 397-3742, or write: P.O. Box 9532, Allen, TX 75013
 - * **TransUnion:** Call (800) 680-7289, or write: Fraud Victim Assistance Division, P.O. Box 6790, Fullerton, CA 92834-6790
- 4 ■** Finally, if you feel you have been the victim of identity theft, file a report with your local police department. Making a report will more easily allow you to be released from liability for charges you did not incur. You should also contact the Federal Trade Commission at **(877) 438-4338** or online at **www.consumer.gov/idtheft**.

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